

Application No. 10/084,491
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116
Reply to Office Action dated June 2, 2003
September 23, 2003

REMARKS

Currently, claims 2-11 are pending in the application, with claims 4, 10 and 11 being withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

Examiner Ghafoorian is thanked for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during the personal interview on September 12, 2003. During the interview, agreement was reached regarding the allowability of independent claim 7 and the related dependent claims. Examiner Ghafoorian included the following comments in the Interview Summary paper handed to applicant's representative: "Discussed claim 7 + applicant pointed out the tubular portion in his independent claim covers needle + helps guide protective sheath + the prior art does not teach such limitation." During the interview, applicant's representative pointed out that claim 7 included: "a fixed sheath fixing the hollow needle and having a tubular portion, the tubular portion partially covering the needle; and

a protective sheath slidably fitted to and guided by the tubular portion of the fixed sheath; wherein,

the protective sheath and the tubular portion of the fixed sheath have a locking means for restricting sliding movement of the protective sheath relative to the tubular portion, and the

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protective sheath is movable from the tubular portion of the fixed sheath to a position the tip of the hollow needle, where is covered entirely". Applicant's representative also pointed out that Wilner (U.S. Patent No. 6,001,083) did not teach or suggest these features.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the 35 USC 102(b) rejection based on Wilner and allow the application.

In view of the agreement made during the interview and the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an action to this effect is respectfully requested.


Also, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the two references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed with the application on February 28, 2002. It is also requested that the Examiner initial and return a copy of PTO Form 1449 indicating such consideration.

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If there are any questions or concerns regarding the claim amendments or these remarks, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 23, 2003


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